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GB A	2170368	GB	0669113
GB A	2105130	GB	0636638
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(54) Superheterodyne radio receiver

(57) A modulated input signal of nominal carrier frequency f_c received on an aerial 1 is converted to base-band at an output terminal 5 by a mixer 3 also fed from a local oscillator 8. If the mixer consisted of a single mixer stage the local oscillator output frequency would have to be f_c, with the result that leakage of this signal to the aerial 1 would result in this being treated as part of the input signal and hence in an unwanted and unpredictable d.c. component at the output terminal 5. Accordingly the conversion is effected by two mixer stages 6, 7 in cascade, the local oscillator frequencies f_1 and f_2 fed to these two stages both lying outside the pass-band of an input filter 4 and satisfying the relation $|f_c \pm f_1| = f_2 \pm$ delta, where delta lies within the frequency range from zero to half the receiver reception bandwidth as defined by a base-band pass filter 46 included between the mixer output 47 and the output terminal 5. A transistor circuit (Fig. 2) is described for the mixers 6 and 7. The received signal may be an FSK signal. In a modification (Fig. 3) a third mixer (7A) is fed with the output from mixer 6 and with the output of the oscillator 10 via a 90° phase shifter (42).
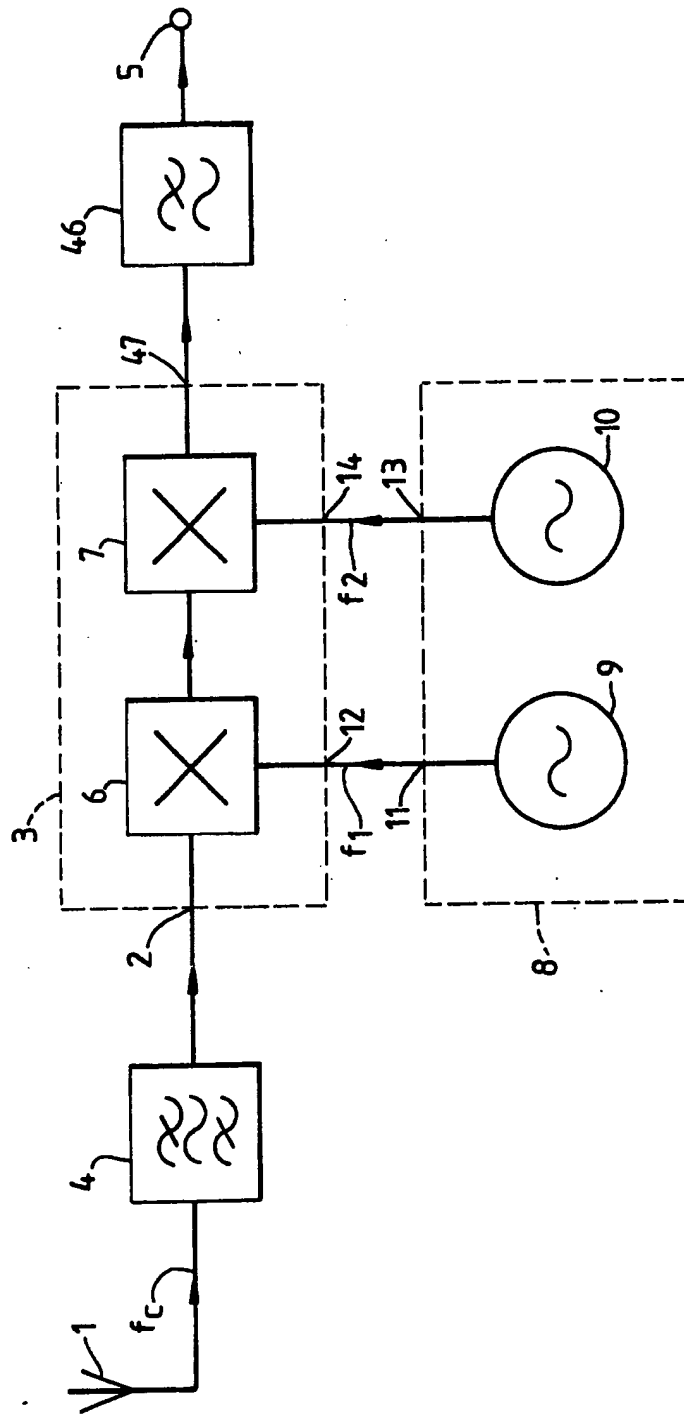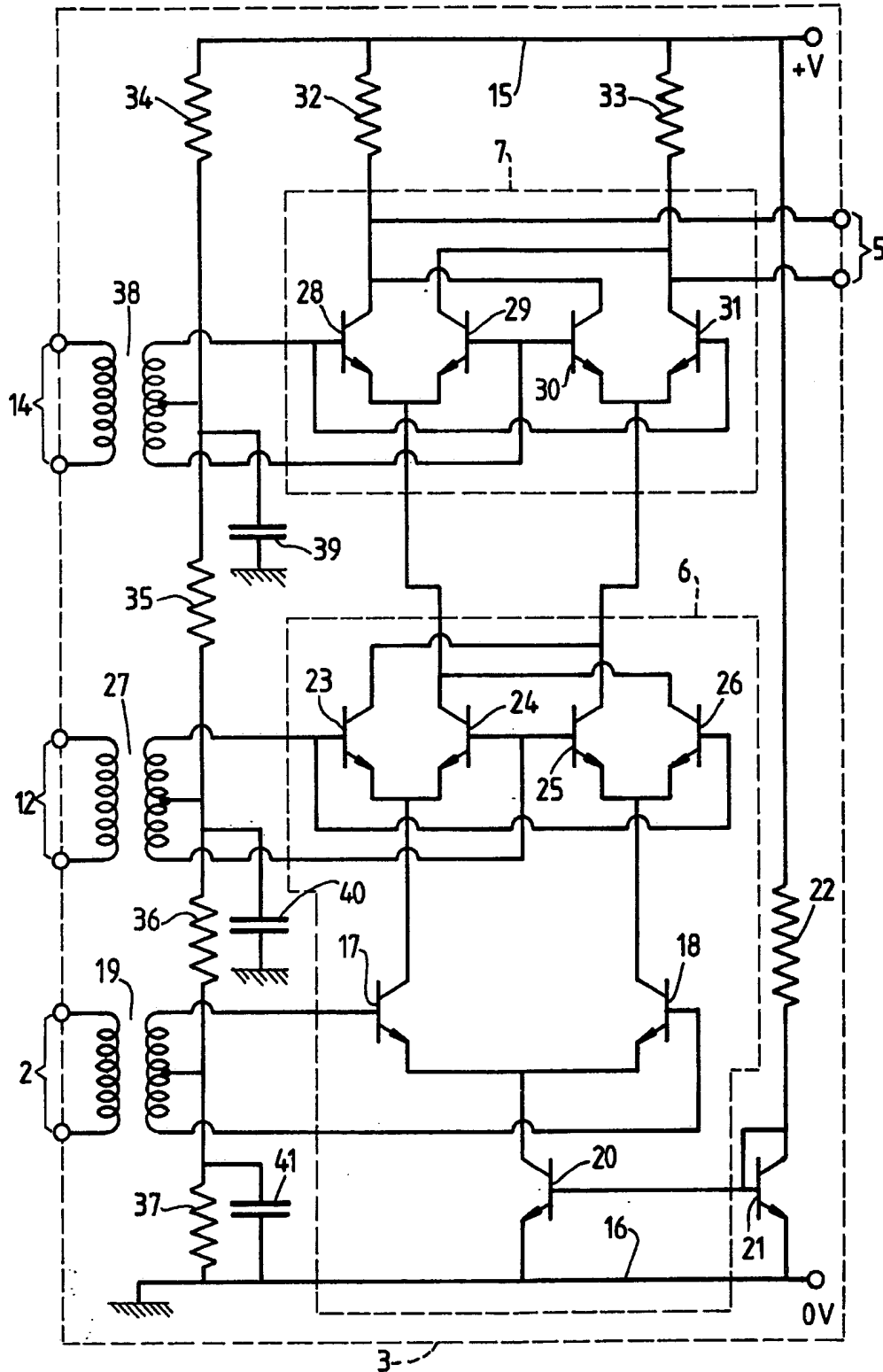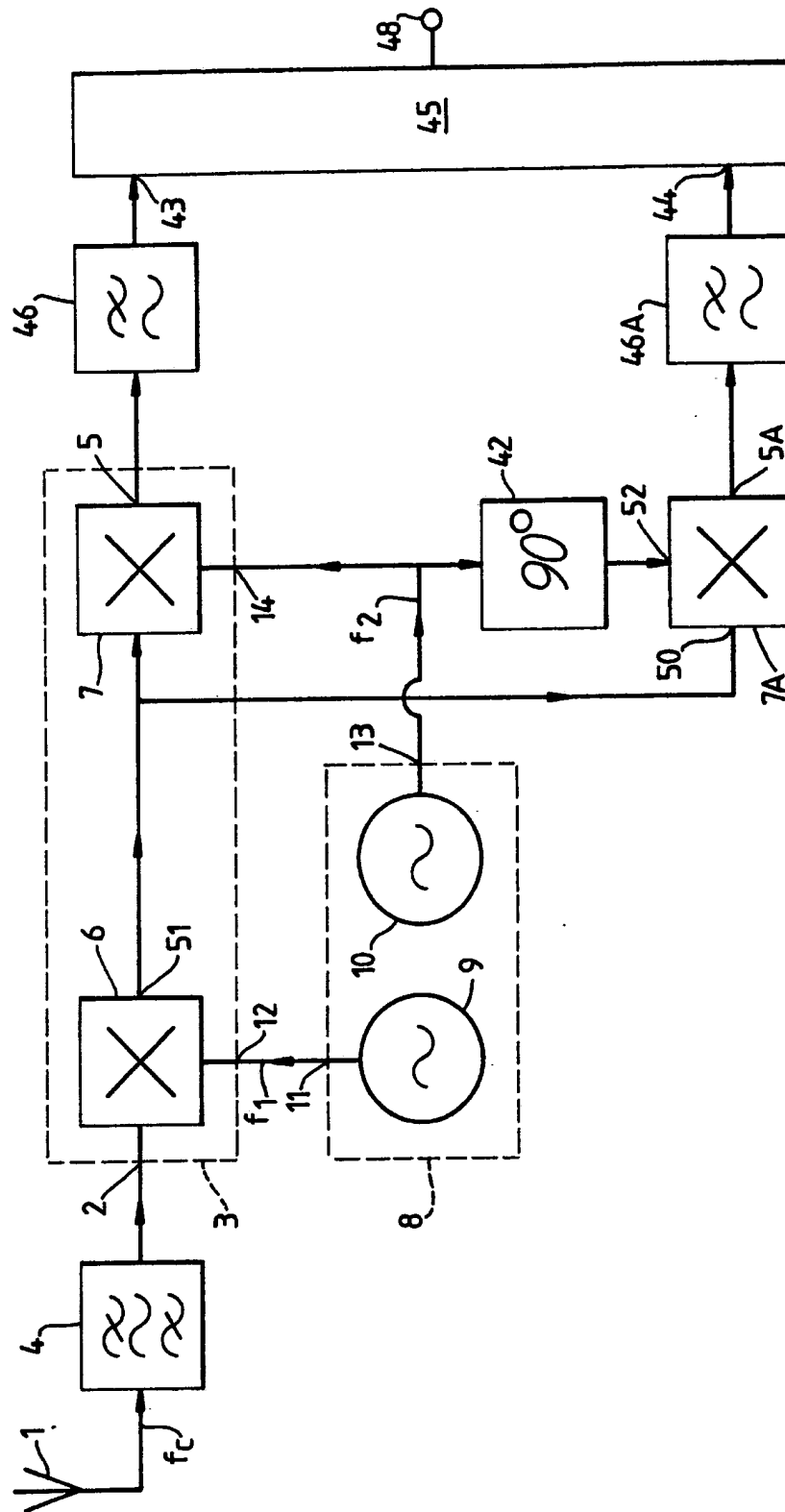
Fig.1.
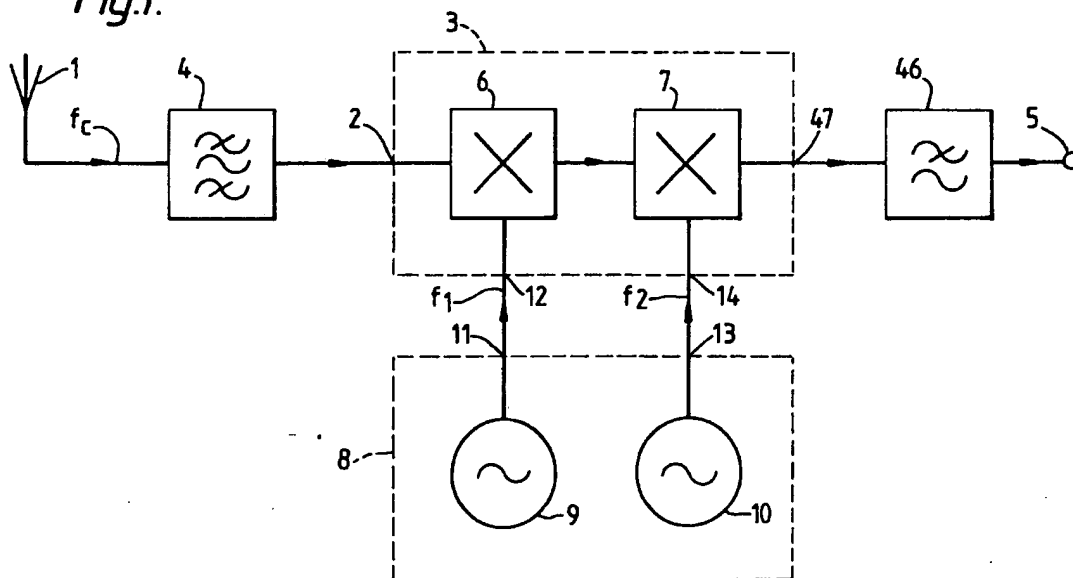
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Fig1.

Fig.2.

Fig.3.

SPECIFICATION
Superheterodyne radio receiver

This invention relates to a superheterodyne radio
5 receiver comprising a pass filter for a frequency
range containing a frequency f_c, which filter has an
input for a received signal and an output, local
oscillator circuit means for producing a signal of
frequency f_1 at an output thereof, a mixer circuit
10 having a first input to which the filter output is
coupled, a second input to which the said output of
the local oscillator circuit means is coupled, and an
output, for translating a modulated signal of
nominal carrier frequency f_c applied to said first
15 input to base-band, and a base-band pass filter to
which the output of the mixer circuit is coupled.
A known such receiver is described, for example,
in an article by I. A. W. Vance entitled "An integrated
circuit VHF radio receiver" in Proc. IERE Conf. Land
20 Mobile Radio, No. 44, pages 193—204, September
1979, and is particularly suitable for construction in
integrated circuit form. In the known receiver $f_1 = f_c$,
so that the mixing of a received modulated signal of
nominal carrier frequency f_c with the local oscillator
25 output signal results directly in a difference
frequency component which is the desired base-
band-translated modulated signal.
A problem with the known receiver is that it is
well-nigh impossible to prevent leakage of a portion
30 of the local oscillator signal of frequency $f_1 = f_c$ to
the input of the pass filter and hence being treated
by the mixer circuit as a component of the received
signal, resulting in a spurious d.c. component in the
mixer output signal. If the leakage were constant
35 such a d.c. component could, for example, be
removed by applying an equal but oppositely-
directed d.c. offset to the mixer output signal.
However, in practice the leakage is found to vary
with ambient conditions and hence to be
40 unpredictable so such an expedient does not give
satisfactory results. It is accordingly an object of the
invention to provide an alternative to the known
receiver in which the aforesaid problem does not
arise or at least arises to a lesser extent.
45 The invention provides a superheterodyne radio
receiver comprising a pass filter for a frequency
range containing a frequency f_c, which filter has an
input for a received signal and an output, local
oscillator circuit means for producing a signal of
50 frequency f_1 at an output thereof, a mixer circuit
having a first input to which the filter output is
coupled, a second input to which said output of the
local oscillator circuit means is coupled, and an
output, for translating a modulated signal of
55 nominal carrier frequency f_c applied to said first
input to base-band, and a base-band pass filter to
which the output of the mixer circuit is coupled,
characterised in that the local oscillator circuit
means has a further output for a signal of frequency
60 f_2 and in that the mixer circuit has a third input to
which said further output is coupled, the
frequencies f_1 and f_2 both lying outside said range
and satisfying the condition

$$|f_c \pm f_1| = f_2 \pm \text{delta,}$$

65 where delta lies within the frequency range from
zero to half the receiver reception bandwidth as
defined by the base-band pass filter.
It has now been recognised that effectively
converting the received signal to base-band in two
70 steps means that neither of the local oscillator
frequencies f_1 and f_2 has any longer to be equal to
the nominal carrier frequency f_c, making it possible
for both to be chosen to lie outside the pass
frequency range of the first filter. (They are
75 preferably chosen so that also their harmonics lie
outside said pass frequency range). When they are
so chosen then, if leakage of the corresponding
signals to the input for the received signal should
occur, these signals will be attenuated by the filter
80 and thus be prevented from reaching the mixer
circuit by this route or, if they should so reach the
mixer circuit, be considerably attenuated in the
process.
It should be noted that an article by W. G. M.
85 Straver, E. H. Nordholt and H. K. Nauta entitled "A
Synchronous phase-lock loop detector for
integrated A.M. radio" in IEEE J. of SS Circuits, Vol.
SC—19, No. 4, August 1984 discloses a
superheterodyne radio receiver which is provided
90 with a pair of quadrature synchronous detectors for
the IF signal, these detectors being implemented as
balanced current switches. However, in this known
receiver it appears that the receiver selectivity is
completely realised in a concentrated ceramic IF
95 filter.
The mixer circuit in a receiver constructed in
accordance with the present invention may
comprise first and second mixer stages with an
output of the first mixer stage coupled to a first input
100 of the second mixer stage, first and second inputs of
the first mixer stage and a second input of the
second mixer stage constituting individual ones of
the said first, second and third inputs of the mixer
circuit. If this is the case then, because in many
105 circumstances it will not be necessary to provide, for
example, filtering of the output signal of the first
mixer stage prior to its application to the second
mixer stage, the output of the first mixer stage may
be directly connected to the first input of the second
110 mixer stage. This can result in a comparatively
simple mixer circuit which is highly suitable for
construction in integrated circuit form.
If a received signal is of the non-symmetrical
double-sideband type then, as is known, provision
115 of two parallel signal channels operating in phase
quadrature in a receiver therefor enables a
distinction to be made between energy in the upper
sideband and energy in the lower sideband, as is
normally required. Such parallel signal channels can
120 conveniently be created in a receiver constructed in
accordance with the present invention in which the
mixer circuit comprises first and second mixer
stages in cascade as referred to above in which the
first and second inputs of the first mixer stage and
125 the second input of the second mixer stage
constitute the first, second and third inputs of the
mixer circuit respectively and in which the local

oscillator circuit means comprises a local oscillator an output of which is coupled to the said further output of the local oscillator circuit means by including in the receiver a third mixer stage to a first
5 input of which is coupled the output of the first mixer stage and to a second input of which is coupled the output of the local oscillator for supplying a signal of frequency f_2 to said second input, a further base-band pass filter to which the
10 output of the third mixer stage is coupled, and means for creating a 90 degree phase difference between the signals supplied to the second input of the second mixer stage and the second input of the third mixer stage. Thus the splitting into the two
15 channels can be arranged to occur after the output of the first mixer stage, enabling the second and third mixer stages to operate on signals of fixed frequency (if the receiver overall is required to be tunable over a range of received frequencies) and
20 hence facilitating the creation of the 90 degree phase difference.

Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying diagrammatic drawings, in which:
25   Figure 1 is a block diagram of a first embodiment,
Figure 2 is a detailed circuit diagram of a possible construction for part of the embodiment of Figure 1, and
Figure 3 is a block diagram of a second
30 embodiment.

In Figure 1 a superheterodyne radio receiver has an input 1 for a received signal, which input is in the form of an aerial and is coupled to a first input 2 of a mixer circuit 3 via a band-pass filter 4. The pass-
35 band of filter 4 contains a frequency f_c and the mixer circuit 3 translates received signals of nominal carrier frequency f_c applied to the aerial 1 and hence transmitted by filter 4 to the mixer input 2, to base-band. The signals so translated appear at an output
40 47 of the mixer circuit whence they are applied to an output 5 of the receiver via a low-pass base-band filter 46 and possibly also a d.c. block capacitor (not shown). If such a d.c. block capacitor is provided the overall frequency characteristic from mixer circuit
45 output 47 to output 5 will, of course, be band-pass. The mixer circuit 3 comprises first and second mixer stages 6 and 7 respectively in cascade, which stages are supplied with local oscillator signals of frequencies f_1 and f_2 respectively from local
50 oscillator circuit means 8. To this end the local oscillator circuit means 8 comprises first and second local oscillators 9 and 10 respectively, which oscillate at the frequencies f_1 and f_2 respectively. The output signal of oscillator 9 is fed to the mixer
55 stage 6 via an output 11 of circuit means 8 and a first input 12 of the mixer circuit 3. Similarly the output signal of oscillator 10 is fed to the mixer stage 7 via a further output 13 of circuit means 8 and a second input 14 of mixer circuit 3. In operation a modulated
60 signal of nominal carrier frequency f_c, for example a single-sideband signal (possibly with suppressed carrier), which is received on aerial 1 is transmitted to the input 2 of mixer circuit 3 via filter 4, is translated to an intermediate nominal carrier
65 frequency $f_c - f_1$ by mixer stage 6 and this

intermediate frequency is then translated to a nominal carrier frequency $(f_c - f_1) - f_2$ by mixer stage 7. The output frequencies f_1 and f_2 of the (non-coherent) oscillators 9 and 10 are chosen to satisfy
70 the relationship

$$|f_c - f_1| = f_2,$$

so that the nominal carrier frequency at the output
75 of mixer 7 and hence at the terminal 5 is zero, i.e. the input signal at aerial 1 is translated overall by mixer circuit 3 to base-band. Both the frequency f_1 and the frequency f_2 are chosen to lie outside the pass-band of the filter 4 so that any part of the output signals of
80 the oscillators 9 and 10 which leaks to the aerial 1 is prevented by filter 4 from reaching the input 2 of mixer circuit 3, or is at least attenuated strongly before doing so, so that it is not treated by mixer circuit 3 as constituting a significant part of the
85 received signal (which would otherwise result in a significant spurious d.c. component at the output 5).

Although it has been assumed that the frequency f_1 is lower than the frequency f_c it will be evident that this is not necessarily the case, it merely being
90 necessary that the relationship between f_c, f_1 and f_2 is such that input signals of nominal carrier frequency f_c are translated overall by mixer circuit 3 to base-band. Moreover the frequency f_2 may as an alternative be chosen equal to $f_c + f_1$ (mixers in
95 general producing output signals having frequencies equal to both the sum of and the difference between the frequencies of their input signals).

If the receiver is intended for reception of signals,
100 for example frequency-shift-keyed signals, the modulation characteristics of which satisfy certain criteria, it may, as is known, be of the so-called "offset" type, in which a nominal input carrier frequency f_c is translated by mixer circuit 3 to a
105 value other than zero, which value, however, still does not exceed the upper cut-off frequency of the base-band filter 46. In such a case the relationship

$$|f_c \pm f_1| = f_2$$

110 will no longer be satisfied exactly, it being relaxed to

$$|f_c \pm f_1| = f_2 \pm delta,$$

115 where delta lies within the frequency range from zero to half the receiver reception bandwidth as defined by filter 46.

Although the local oscillator circuit means 8 has been described as comprising two separate
120 oscillators 9 and 10 it will be evident that it may in fact comprise a single oscillator the output of which is coupled to the outputs 11 and 13 via respective frequency dividers which produce respective sub-harmonics of the oscillator output signal or
125 respective filters which select respective harmonics of the oscillator output signal. If it were not for the fact that it is highly desirable that the frequencies f_1 and f_2 are not harmonically related to the frequency f_c the single oscillator could even feed both the
130 outputs 11 and 13 directly, i.e. the outputs 11 and 13

could even be combined.

A pass filter which includes within its pass
frequency range that one of the frequencies $f_c + f_1$
and $f_c - f_1$ which corresponds substantially to f_2,
5 may be included between the output of mixer stage
6 and the input of mixer stage 7, as may
amplification stages, if desired. However, in many
cases such a filter will not be necessary because it
can be arranged that filter 4 removes any signals in
10 the region around f_2 which might otherwise reach
the output of mixer 6 via aerial 1 in an unbalanced
configuration and get mixed to base-band. If such a
pass-filter is not provided it will be appreciated that
the functions of the inputs 2, 12 and 14 of mixer
15 circuit 3 are then completely interchangeable. Thus,
for example, the output 13 of local oscillator circuit
means 8 may then be connected to input 2 and the
output of filter 4 be connected to input 14.

If desired the aerial 1 may form at least part of the
20 band-pass filter 4. Thus, for example, the inductive
part of filter 4 may be constituted by a relatively
large loop of conductive material containing one or
more turns, the two ends of the conductor being
connected in parallel with a tuning capacitor so that
25 the resulting resonant circuit resonates at
substantially f_c and also being connected to the
input 2 of mixer circuit 3. The loop will then form the
input for the received signal.

Figure 2 is a detailed circuit diagram of a possible
30 construction for the mixer circuit 3 of Figure 1. The
construction shown in Figure 2 comprises, in effect,
two double-balanced mixers 6 and 7 connected in
series between a pair of d.c. power supply
conductors 15 and 16. Mixer 6 comprises a first pair
35 of emitter-coupled switching transistors 17 and 18
the bases of which are fed in antiphase from the
input 2 via a transformer 19. The emitters of the
transistors 17 and 18 are fed from the collector of a
current-source transistor 20 which constitutes the
40 output of a current mirror, its base being connected
to the base of a diode-connected transistor 21 which
is fed from the positive power supply line 15 via a
resistor 22. The collectors of the transistors 17 and
18 are connected to the commoned emitters of a
45 second pair of transistors 23, 24 and to the
commoned emitters of a third pair of transistors
25, 26 respectively. The bases of the transistors 23
and 24 are fed in antiphase from the input 12 via a
transformer 27, as are the emitters of the transistors
50 25 and 26. Mixer 7 comprises a fourth pair of
transistors 28, 29 the interconnected emitters of
which are fed from the interconnected collectors of
the transistors 24 and 26, and a fifth pair of
transistors 30, 31 the interconnected emitters of
55 which are fed from the interconnected collectors of
the transistors 23 and 25. The interconnected
collectors of the transistors 28 and 30 are fed via a
load resistor 32 from the supply line 15 and are also
connected to one terminal of the (balanced) output
60 5. Similarly, the interconnected collectors of the
transistors 29 and 31 are fed via a load resistor 33
from the supply line 15 and are also connected to
the other terminal of the output 5. The bases of the
transistors 28 and 29 are fed in antiphase from the
65 input 14 via a transformer 38, as are the bases of the

transistors 30 and 31. Suitable d.c. bias potentials
are supplied to the bases of the various transistors
by means of a potential divider comprising resistors
34, 35, 36 and 37 connected in series between the
70 power supply lines 15 and 16, the junction of
resistors 34 and 35 being connected to a centre tap
on the secondary winding of transformer 38 and to a
decoupling capacitor 39, the junction of resistors 35
and 36 being connected to a centre tap on the
75 secondary winding of transformer 27 and to a
decoupling capacitor 40, and the junction of
resistors 36 and 37 being connected to a centre tap
on the secondary winding of transformer 19 and to a
decoupling capacitor 41. The transistors of Figure 2
80 together with their interconnections are preferably
formed as a single integrated circuit on the same
chip.

If the received signal applied to the aerial 1 of
Figure 1 is, for example, an FSK (frequency shift
85 keyed) signal the frequency of which switches
between frequencies $f_c + f_d$ and $f_c - f_d$, the receiver
of Figure 1 will not distinguish between input
energy in the upper sideband and input energy in
the lower sideband, as is normally required. As is
90 known, for example from the publication referred to
in the preamble, a distinction can be made with such
signals by employing two parallel signal channels in
the receiver, and combining the signals appearing at
the outputs of the two channels, it being arranged
95 that the signals passing through the two channels
have a quadrature phase relationship with each
other. Such channels are normally provided by
connecting the output of the input filter (4 in Figure
1) to the inputs of two mixers, the other input of one
100 of these mixers being supplied directly with the
output signal of a local oscillator and the other input
of the other mixer being supplied with this output
signal via a 90° phase-shifter. If the receiver is
tunable, i.e. if both the centre frequency of the pass-
105 band of the input filter and the frequency of the local
oscillator output signal are made variable, it can be
difficult to obtain the required 90° phase shift
accurately for all the possible values of the local
oscillator output frequency. An extended version of
110 the receiver of Figure 1 can provide a solution to this
problem. A block diagram of such an extended
version is shown in Figure 3 in which components
having counterparts in Figure 1 have been given the
same reference numerals.

115 The additional components of the receiver of
Figure 3 as compared with those of Figure 1 are
basically a third mixer stage 7A and a 90° phase-
shifter 42, the outputs 5 and 5A of the mixer stages 7
and 7A respectively being connected to respective
120 inputs 43 and 44 of a decoder 45 via low-pass base-
band filters 46 and 46A respectively. Decoder 45 has
an output 48. One input 50 of mixer stage 7A is
connected to the output 51 of mixer stage 6 and the
other input 52 thereof is fed from the output 13 of
125 local oscillator circuit means 8 via the 90 degree
phase-shifter 42. Thus the mixer stage 6 is common
to the two channels feeding the inputs 43 and 44
respectively of decoder 45 and the quadrature
relationship between the two channels is obtained
130 by means of the phase-shifter 42. If tuning is

required in the receiver of Figure 3 this can be
achieved by varying the output frequency of
oscillator 9 (and the centre-frequency of the pass
band of filter 4), the output frequency of oscillator
5 10, and hence also the frequency fed to phase shifter
42, being maintained constant. If the construction of
Figure 2 is employed for the mixer circuit 3 the
mixer stage 7A can be obtained in a simple manner
by duplicating the transistor pairs 28, 29 and 30, 31
10 together with their load resistors and their base
input circuits, preferably on the same
semiconductor chip on which is formed the
construction of Figure 2.
   Similarly to Figure 1, if there is no pass filter in the
15 output of mixer stage 6, the points to which the
outputs 11 and 13 of local oscillator circuit means 8
and the output of pass-filter 4 in Figure 3 are
connected are interchangeable, although it is
preferred not to connect filter 4 to the junction point
20 of input 14 and phase-shifter 42, because it will then
be more difficult to provide phase-shifter 42 with the
characteristic then required.
   It is not essential to construct the filters 4 of
Figures 1 and 3 as band-pass filters. In some cases
25 constructing them as high-pass or low-pass filters
may provide satisfactory results, provided always
that the frequencies f_1 and f_2 both lie outside the
pass frequency range of the filter.

30 CLAIMS
   1. A superheterodyne radio receiver comprising a
first pass filter for a frequency range containing a
frequency f_c, which filter has an input for a received
signal and an output, local oscillator circuit means
35 for producing a signal of frequency f_1 at an output
thereof, a mixer circuit having a first input to which
the filter output is coupled, a second input to which
said output of the local oscillator circuit means is
coupled, and an output, for translating a modulated
40 signal of nominal carrier frequency f_c applied to said
first input to base-band, and a base-band pass filter
to which the output of the mixer circuit is coupled,
characterised in that the local oscillator circuit
means has a further output for a signal of frequency
45 f_2 and in that the mixer circuit has a third input to
which said further output is coupled, the
frequencies f_1 and f_2 both lying outside said range

and satisfying the condition

$$|f_c + f_1| = f_2 \pm delta,$$

50 where delta lies within the frequency range from
zero to half the receiver reception bandwidth as
defined by the base-band pass filter.
   2. A receiver as claimed in Claim 1, characterised
in that the mixer circuit comprises first and second
55 mixer stages with an output of the first mixer stage
coupled to a first input of the second mixer stage,
first and second inputs of the first mixer stage and a
second input of the second mixer stage constituting
individual ones of the said first, second and third
60 inputs of the mixer circuit.
   3. A receiver as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 2,
characterised in that the output of the first mixer
stage is directly connected to the first input of the
second mixer stage.
65   4. A receiver as claimed in any preceding Claim,
characterised in that the local oscillator circuit
means comprises a single oscillator the output of
which is coupled to both outputs of said local
oscillator circuit means.
70   5. A receiver as claimed in Claim 2, or in Claim 3
when appended to Claim 2, wherein the first and
second inputs of the first mixer stage and the
second input of the second mixer stage constitute
the first, second and third inputs of the mixer circuit
75 respectively, wherein the local oscillator circuit
means comprises a local oscillator an output of
which is coupled to said further output, wherein the
receiver includes a third mixer stage to a first input
of which is coupled the output of the first mixer
80 stage and to a second input of which is coupled the
output of the local oscillator for supplying a signal of
frequency f_2 to said second input, and a further
base-band pass filter to which the output of the third
mixer stage is coupled, and wherein means are
85 provided for creating a 90° phase difference
between the signals supplied to the second input of
the second mixer stage and the second input of the
third mixer stage.
   6. A superheterodyne radio receiver substantially
90 as described herein with reference to Figure 1,
Figures 1 and 2 or Figure 3 of the drawings.